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I've watch'd her gazing on the drifting cloud,
Which mock'd her vision with its changing way,
Whilst, with an air of independence proud,
She scorn'd the warnings of departing day:
The glen, the rock, the grotto—or the shed,
Shall strew her couch, and canopy her bed.

Or if she may revisit human homes,
And walk the village at the twilight hour,
By habit, not necessity, she comes,
And finds a place in every cottage floor;
If nature trembles at her awful form,
Still 'tis remembered that her mind *was* bright—
And if she is a wreck from misery's storm,
She'll yet find shelter in a world of light;
Even superstition ministers her good,
And calls it such to give her home and food.

Adieu, poor maniac, may thy breast have peace,
And future happiness be thine to know,
In better worlds, where sorrows all shall cease,
And rivers of delight for ever flow;
May God rebuke the evil spirit here,
Which chains thy reason in the bonds of grief,
And o'er thy bosom spring the healing tear
Which gives to sorrow all its own relief;
Its place of glory may thy spirit find,
Free, sitting, clothed—and in its own right mind.

THE MAMLUK.*

When *ladies* write, it is not in the nature of *Irishmen* to be stern reviewers. Gallantry towards the sex is too strongly interwoven in our national character, to allow the pages of a *national* magazine to be altogether free from its influence. Besides which, it is so seldom that we meet with any of the Society of *Friends*, male or female, wandering in the paths of poesy—to them almost forbidden—that we could not think of frightening one such wanderer back by the rude and unsparing severity of rigid criticism. Though the little volume has been put into our hands, without much of formal introduction to its authoress—and we can find nothing in the shape of preface to explain the why or the wherefore of her venturing before the public—there is yet a kind of hint upon the subject in the introductory stanzas, so modestly, and at the same time so prettily expressed, that it could not fail of bespeaking our favourable attention.

Deep bury'd in the ocean's cell,
In silence rests the sounding shell;
No airs have fann'd its coral cave—
Regardless o'er it, ebbs the wave—
Its polish'd zone, green waters lave—
Till, tempest-toss'd, it rises o'er
The sea-beat, surge and rocky shore,
And, flung to land, its ocean-roar
First breaks upon the list'ning ear,
In sounds that childhood loves to hear.

Thus is it with the poet's lyre—
In slumber chain'd each potent wire,
Till call'd to-day, it wakes the strain,
So long it had possess'd in vain.
Still hadst thou slumber'd in the main,

* The Mamluk, and other Poems. By Eleanor Dickenson. London: Wilson, 1830.

*My vocal shell ;—but tempests rose
And woke thee from thy calm repose :
Haply the strain which from thee flows
The youthful ear may please awhile.
Nor unimprov'd an hour beguile.*

But our fair friend will, perhaps, be deemed unfortunate in the choice of a subject for "her vocal shell." The adventures of Ali Pacha, are of too boisterous a character for the delicate sketching and soft touches of a female pen. They are, besides, in themselves so deeply interesting and so wildly romantic, even when narrated in sober prose, that the mind is unfavourably pre-occupied with high-wrought expectations of what a poem, on such a theme, ought to achieve. To equal these expectations would require first-rate powers—a vigour of intellect possessed by few. It would need the genius of a Byron, and much, too, of the darkness of his heart, to describe, in real poetry, such a character as that of Ali, to sustain the narrative of the deeds of crime or of glory through which he first struggled to his eminence, then hurried to his downfall ; as well as a brush dipped in "dyes of heaven," to give any adequate representation of the scenery in the midst of which most of his exploits were performed. Indeed, the very name has a kind of poetic association with that of the noble bard, which must be prejudicial to any inferior child of song, who may venture to make it the subject of his lay. In the poem before us, there is no attempt to lay open the workings of such a mind ; nor to pourtray in their horrors the atrocities which, in the government of Ali, were strangely mingled with the benefits which his authority conferred.

There are, interspersed throughout the poem, some sweetly-flowing lines descriptive of morning, noon, and midnight scenery, by sea and land. We take a specimen at random from the commencement of the first canto :—

'Twas night ! one bright as fancy's dream,
A night, whose silent hour
Shed on the earth a silvery beam
Of beauty's spell-like pow'r.
So bright the canopy of heav'n
Its glittering lights unfurl'd,
As if their shining hosts had ris'n
To guard the slumbering world.
The moon's pale torch was gleaming far
O'er mountain, vale, and grove ;
And richly gemmed with many a star
Her azure court above.
The ocean slumber'd in its bed,
And calm upon its breast
Each little billow, softly spread,
Had sparkled into rest.

Yet the scenery throughout is not delineated with that bold graphic touch which would at once transport us in imagination to eastern climes, and makes us feel as though we breathed a foreign air. The breeze and the billow—the silvery moonbeam, and the golden sunbeam, with all the *etceteras* of our western landscapes, have become so completely the common places of every poetaster, that we are weary of their perpetual recurrence ; and we reasonably enough expect when wafted by the wings of Pegasus to distant countries, that there should be something of novelty in sky, and land, and water, and every thing around us. But we must not find fault with our fair friend, that she has not flung around her hero the gloomy grandeur of the Childe Harold, or given to

her eastern scenery the glowing and voluptuous richness which we meet with in the descriptive passages of our countryman, Moore.

Still we cannot but express our surprise, that our authoress did not select a theme more congenial to her taste and powers, to her sex and her religion. Had she tracked the footsteps of good Bernard Barton's quiet muse, there can be no question that she would have produced a far more pleasing and profitable poem. For, after all, "the Mamluk" forms a strange and incongruous compound of romance and history, love and religion. The crowded character of the incidents which are compressed into the story, and the exceedingly abrupt transitions by which the reader is necessarily hurried from one to another, render it impossible to follow out the plot with that ease which is so essential to the enjoyment of poetry, as well as of every other species of pleasure. We speak of a plot, but we doubt whether we use the term in this instance with propriety. The incidents are strung together, without any thing of that ingenuity of plan, or unity of purpose, which constitute the great charm in all works of imagination, from the epic poem down to the novel or the nursery tale. The simple thread which runs through the poem, and is the means of the concatenation of its parts, is the history of Aza, the bride of Ali. At the opening of the first canto, the pirate bark, whose crew have carried off this precious treasure, in order to enrich some Turkish harem, is discovered approaching the shores of the Holy Land; whence, after a short anchorage, it is again descried ploughing the deep on its way for Egypt. The scene suddenly shifts to Cairo, whose streets are at the moment enlivened by the bustle of a caravan, ready to march for Mecca. The Emir Ibrahim, the commander of this caravan, is in want of a female slave as a farewell present for his mistress Zaide, and commissions one of his followers to negotiate the purchase. Accordingly, no sooner is Aza brought into the market, than she becomes the property of the Emir, on her way to whose seraglio she steals a glance, prophetic of her future destiny, at her purchaser, who to the readers of the poem is thus far strictly *incognito*. Zaide, at the first sight of this fair slave, is fired with jealousy at her personal charms, and determines at once on ridding herself of so dangerous a rival.

It is not till the second canto that we are introduced in due form to Ali, the hero of the poem, who not only turns out to be the agent in the purchase of Aza, on whom she then bestowed such a tender glance, but even a countryman of hers; nay more, her own true and constant lover; a circumstance which, however, she does not for a considerable time seem to suspect, Ali having along with his religion parted with his original name. He is somewhat abruptly brought forward by the exclamation of Ibrahim—

Thanks, gallant Cachef, to thy blade,

who, in acknowledgment of some exploit, of the nature of which we are not very distinctly informed, asks

What wilt thou at thy chieftain's hand?
Name—but, nay more—thy wish command.
Whate'er it be, if in my power,
I will not wave thy claim an hour.

After a modest pause, and more blushes than we were prepared to expect from a renegade—putting his hand to his heart, and so on, the youth replies,

Commission'd by you, on the day
We bent from Cairo's walls our way,
I barter'd for a beauteous slave,
Attendant to the queen, you gave.

But ah ! her faultless charms impressed
Their fatal image on my breast—

with much to the same purport. In answer to which, the Emir honestly regrets that the young hero had not asked for his own daughter Eva, and promises to use his influence with Zaide, in order to obtain for Ali his heart's desire.

On the return of the caravan to Cairo, an event to which we are hurried forward with a rapidity not altogether consistent with the tediousness of a march through the desert, Ali's suit is urged by his faithful master, but the fair slave is not to be found, and Zaide persuades her credulous lord that she

Has died, the victim of despair.

Ali, almost inconsolable for his loss, is, however, compensated by being raised to the dignity of a Bey, through the influence of his friend, the Emir, and becomes, at least so we are led to conjecture, the son-in-law of his benefactor, who is assassinated by a perfidious Circassian, against whom Ali vows revenge. The execution of this vow, and the career of the young Bey's ambition is for a while suspended, by one of those incidents so frequent in novels, and so unusual any where else, by the fortunate intervention of which, the little of plot that there is in the poem is conducted to a favourable issue. A lady singing to her lute in the gardens of his harem, catches the attention of Ali. In the person of the minstrel he discovers his loved and long lost Aza, who has been snatched from the cruelty of Zaide, by that rather hacknied stratagem, the administration of a sleeping potion, instead of a dose of poison, and the depositing in the grave intended for her, the corpse of another female who had died in the very nick of time, although not just killed for the occasion. By the trusty eunuch who had saved her life, Aza had been hitherto protected, and at the command of Ali is now produced. After various struggles of coy reluctance, in which religious scruples are strangely introduced, and as strangely overcome, she consents to become the second living wife of the renegade, whom beforehand she discovers to be her once loved and long lamented Hadar. The father of Ali, who turns out to be a Greek priest, is introduced most opportunely for the purpose of tying the knot, and Aza's widowed mother is by the same conveyance, and at the same moment wafted to her daughter's affectionate embraces. And here we should certainly have recommended our fair friend to have wound up her story with the usual peroration of all such narratives, which she might easily have put into rhyme so as to form a concluding couplet—

And if they did not live and die,
A happy pair, may you and I.

Or, if by way of *finale*, she wished to have formed a triplet, she might in equally harmonious numbers have bid her gentle harp "good bye!"

But, not satisfied with conducting the fortunes of her heroine to so satisfactory a conclusion, the muse, somewhat garrulous, was resolved on telling out the remainder of the story. Ali, like too many others, makes but a bad husband, and despite of the warnings and intreaties of his bride, perpetrates some mysterious deed, of the nature of which the poem gives us no very clear explanation, though there is ground to suspect that it is an act of revenge on the Circassian, who had assassinated his benefactor. In the rapidly shifting scenes of his after-life, we lose sight of Zaide, and Eva, and Aza, and Ali's father, and Aza's mother, and all the other *dramatis personæ*, with whom we had taken the trouble of forming an acquaintance in our progress through the pre-

ceding cantos, and none, save Ali and some other desperadoes as ruthless as himself, are allowed to be our companions through the remainder of the poem. We cannot venture upon following him through the boisterous and bloody transactions of his subsequent life. He at last falls a victim to his ambition; but his dying moments are soothed by the devotedness of his followers, the mercy of his enemies, and above all, the care and attention of his faithful Aza, who had followed him in disguise, and who after burying him at Acre, retires to the haunts of her childhood, and spends the remnant of her days in solitude and grief.

From the sketch we have given, it will be seen that in the plan of the poem there is little of unity or invention. It is far too full of disjointed and far-distant incidents; and, for the benefit of those who may at any future time purpose writing an epic, or who shall otherwise venture to mount on the wings of fame, we may observe, that this is the great defect in the poem before us—it gives it more of the prosaic air of narrative, than of the kindling soul of poetry. There has been no selection of one grand centre-point of interest in the history of Ali, as the great subject of the poem, around which minor circumstances might have been skilfully arranged as episodes. The writer is fettered by the number of facts that are to be done into verse, and fairly bewildered in the attempt to bestow on each a sufficient quantity of lines, without exceeding the limits that expediency prescribed. The reader is confused by being hurried, with the rapidity of rail-road travelling, from one event to another. But we were still more disappointed to find that there was no moral in the tale. It is a mere story told for the sake of being told; and not designed to give point or energy to any one moral truth. We were surprised, especially considering the religious denomination to which, we understand, our fair friend belongs, that in the history of a female slave, narrated by a female pen, there was no spirit-stirring philippic against slavery; and that in a continuous narrative of battles and bloodshed, there should occur but a faint and feeble expression of an aversion to war. Verily, Eleaor, we were going to forget our professions of gallantry, in the kindling of our spirit against thee, for these, considering thy sex and the Society to which thou dost belong, unpardonable omissions.

We have done with fault-finding. Where the progress of the narrative gives breathing-time for the utterance of sentiment, there occur passages of redeeming worth and beauty. Our more grateful, as well as easier task remains;—to cull a few of these, along with one or two of the shorter pieces at the end of the volume, in several of which there is so much real poetry, that we could have wished “the Mamluk” curtailed of a canto or two, in order to leave space for the insertion of still more of such miscellanies; and if we cannot crown our fair friend as the *queen* of song, we yet feel persuaded, that in the estimation of our readers, these flowers of her own poesy, will form for her no mean or ungraceful garland; the beauty or the fragrance of which we shall not spoil by interweaving with it, like the deadly night-shade, any of the carplings or exceptions of critical remark.

WOMAN.

O woman! gen'rous, fond, sincere,
How oft thy very virtues prove
Bane of thy peace—affliction's tear!
How oft betray'd to sordid love!